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The American RECORD GUIDE

formerly THE AMERICAN MUSIC LOVER



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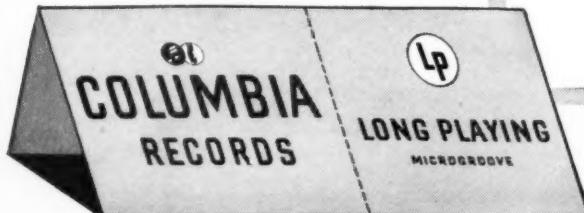
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The American RECORD GUIDE

September, 1948 ▲ Vol. XV, No. 1

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In the past month there have been rumors of recording advancements other than the currently touted long-playing record. It is reported that whole symphonies and operas will be made available to the general public on magnetic tape in the near future. If this is true, it would seem the problem of multiple duplication — heretofore regarded as the drawback to tape recording — has been solved. There have been some marked developments in magnetic tape recording in recent months, and we have asked a leading engineer in the field to tell us about these in a coming issue. When and if tape recordings, made by one of the large record manufacturers, appear for use by the general public, new problems of reproducing equipment for the consumer will arise. The cheaper tape machines on the market now are low frequency units, and in direct comparison with a good phonograph reproduction is inferior.

With each new advancement in the art of sound reproduction, it is apparent that better than average equipment becomes essential to reveal full range and quality. The cart seems inevitably to be before the horse, for recording these days is far ahead of most playing equipment commercially marketed.

This is the case to date with Columbia's new Microgroove (long playing) record. Though the record has extended frequency range to 10,000 c.p.s., the Philco player sponsored by Columbia offers reproduction of little more than half its frequencies. The quality of the recording, heard through this player, varies with different amplifying systems. Connected through high fidelity equipment, it does not give the best results.

Judging from letters received from readers, many people feel its performance through ordinary commercial equipment is generally good, though several complain of "peaking" of the highs and others find the bass heavier than they like. Thus we have an impression that the player may not mate as well with all equipment as its maker would have us believe.

We spent considerable time this past month comparing the new long playing disc and its 78 r.p.m. counterpart under ideal testing conditions. Most of these tests were made at the laboratories of the Audak Company in New York, where Maximilian Weil, their chief engineer, demonstrated Audak's newly developed pickup for playing these records. Hearing the "Microgroove" on equipment open to 10,000 c.p.s. with this wide-range pickup, we were greatly impressed with its excellent qualities, its greater dynamic realism. Mr. Weil's enthusiasm during these tests is of interest, and at our request he made the following comments especially for our readers:

"It is absolutely true that the dynamics in these new long playing records, assuredly in regard to *diminuendo*, are far in advance of what has heretofore been heard from commercial discs, and the quality of the performance is exceptionally fine when played on first-class equipment.

"If handled with ordinary care and played with reproducers properly designed for that purpose, these records are less fragile than most would think and definitely practical in the home. Should one drop the properly designed reproducer, the damage would be negligible and hardly have the faintest resemblance or comparison to the damage resulting from the average pickup being dropped on a regular commercial record.

Surface Noise

"Surface noise is greatly eliminated in these new discs because of the material used and the special recording technique. In my estimation, scratch or surface noise is no more apparent than it is on good radio reception. As a matter of fact, it is quieter than a great deal of radio reception we get these days. Though these records will undoubtedly collect dust, the same as any others, they are easier to clean. A soft cloth, damped slightly, not only successfully cleans them

but prevents development of static charge.

"One should bear in mind that the initial supply of long playing records consists of recordings, or dubbing, from originals. Though their quality is excellent, considering this, it stands to reason if direct recording is used, and no dubbing process employed at any point, results must be better.

"One point about Microgroove records which puzzles me is why — as long as the prospective purchaser has to acquire special equipment — Columbia did not make them in a larger size, such as 14 and 16 inches as used for transcriptions. Not only would longer playing time have resulted but because of the higher linear speed such records would have been superior in musical performance."

Let us consider further Mr. Weil's statement. John Raynor, a Connecticut sound technician known to our readers, agrees wholeheartedly with him on the quality of these new discs. He writes: "I have had the opportunity to compare the new long playing record with its 78 r.p.m. counterpart on professional equipment with radiation from the speaker up to 10,000 c.p.s. I consider this new disc to be superior to regular records when heard on proper equipment, sounding cleaner and crisper than the 78 r.p.m. Cymbals, triangles, etc. prove more brilliant and glittering than on the older record."

Cleaning the L. P. Disc

In regard to surface sound and cleaning of the long playing record, we have received from Columbia, since our interview with Mr. Weil, the following statement:

"All vinylite records are subject to static electrical charges as a result of friction caused by rubbing. Because of this, it is difficult to clean vinylite surfaces by brushing with dry cloths, etc. In order to realize the full tonal qualities of these records, it is particularly important that their surfaces be kept free from dust and other foreign substances. The best method for cleaning them is to use a slightly damp soft cloth, such as cotton flannel or chamois. Rubbing the damp cloth over the surface prevents the development of a static charge. Consequently, the lint and dust particles are not attracted to the surface and can be removed. It is important that the cloth be not too wet because water

(Continued on page 10)



The Development of the Long-Playing Record

By Ulysses "Jim" Walsh

Nowhere does history repeat itself more persistently than in the science, or art, of sound reproducing and recording. Every claim that is possible for a phonograph or record manufacturer to make has been shouted almost from the very moment of Edison's invention of the first tinfoil cylinder instrument in 1877. The 1948 manufacturer who shrieks that his radio-phonograph, which may also be equipped with television, gives "perfect reproduction" claims no more than Emile Berliner asserted for his first crude disc machine in the '90's.

A 1903 Sears, Roebuck catalog describes Columbia brown wax cylinders as being "electrically recorded." (That probably means that the recording apparatus was powered by electricity.) The first issue of the *Talking Machine News*, which appeared in London in May, 1903, contains a two-paragraph discussion of a method of recording sound on film, so that motion pictures could both be seen and heard. As early as 1907, Columbia had a method of synchronizing the huge "concert" size cylinders with films to give a semblance of talking pictures, and Thomas A. Edison did the same thing more effectively five years later. Too, one of the 1903 editions of that same *Talking Machine News* reveals that a Danish inventor named Paulsen had produced a method of recording on wire or tape.

Now, with Columbia having recently introduced what has been termed a "completely revolutionary" way of recording as

much as 45 minutes of music on a single twelve-inch disc, it may be interesting to turn back a few pages of the phonograph's history and consider the many varying methods that have been used in the hope of getting long-playing results.

From the introduction of the phonograph as a medium of home entertainment, there has been a demand for a longer record. The clamor was particularly strident in the days when the wax cylinder dominated the field. Cylinders played little, if any, longer than two minutes, which meant that an ordinary popular song had to be sung too fast to get it all on, or that part of the song was omitted. As for more serious music, there just was not anything that could be done.

One of the suggestions most frequently made in cylinder days was that the preliminary announcement should be left off, thus saving all of 10 or 15 seconds worth of space for more music. Announcements eventually were discontinued — more's the pity — but that didn't do anything to provide more music. The demand for longer records seems to have been stronger in Great Britain than in the United States. The Russell Hunting Company, which marketed the Sterling record, produced in 1905 a cylinder which it boasted played on an average from 15 to 30 seconds longer than those of other companies. The pioneer Edison-Bell firm had an "Xtralong" cylinder. In 1906, the American Columbia company produced a six-inch cylinder, the Premier, somewhat longer than the

standard size. This, however, would play only on Columbia's Twentieth Century Sound Magnifying Graphophone, a stentorian monster whose loud and raucous tone, produced by pressure of an amber flywheel, could be heard a mile or more. Many listeners imagined that the big concert cylinders played longer than the smaller size, but that was an illusion. They were louder, but not longer.

The situation was somewhat better from the disc buyer's standpoint. By 1902, Victor and Columbia were marketing 12-inch records, which gave about four minutes of music. And, although it is not generally known, both companies also made single-faced 14-inch discs of band and orchestral selections in 1903. They were too expensive, however, and were soon discontinued. In 1905, the Neophone company, established in England by a Swiss inventor, Dr. A. Michaelis, was making 20-inch operatic discs. Neophone records were the first discs to be made by the hill and dale method and played with a jewel point. They are said to have been almost unbearably noisy and harsh, and the company did not last long. Nevertheless, Pathé adapted the Neophone system when it introduced its vertical cut, sapphire-ball discs in 1906, after several years of success in the cylinder business. Pathé also turned out some 20-inch discs for display at exhibitions, but they apparently never were on general sale, although some 16-inch Pathé Giants of dance music were sold years later in this country.

The "Complete Song Singer"

One of the most interesting, and amusing, proposed ways of supplying longer playing records for cylinder users was first announced in June, 1908. Joseph Clarkson, a mechanic of 149 Paley Road, Bradford, England, revealed that he had obtained patents for constructing a new type of cylinder machine, which would be sold under the name of the Longest-Playing Phone, or Complete Song Singer. (Obviously, that name was enough to kill the thing from the beginning.) The Complete Song Singer was to be sold for 6 pounds and 15 shillings and was introduced in these cryptic words:

"At last an accomplished fact. The problem of the arc of a circle solved."

The following is quoted from Mr. Clarkson's announcement:

"This patent device comes to supply a long felt want. There is not another Phonograph on the market that plays a song, etc., right through. This will take two eight-inch or one sixteen-inch record, or plays four of your own consecutively, and automatically lifts Reproducer from each Record to the next and off the last, therefore needs no attention whatever. We are going to make these longer Records, which will be of superior quality and practically unbreakable . . . This patent applies also to disc machines."

"Help Wanted"

At the bottom of the announcement was an invitation for "a few working men and phono dealers to form a small limited company" to sell shares in the concern and divide the profits. Lack of capital probably was one reason why the Longest-Playing Phone, which was certainly an odd appearing device, never got beyond the advertising stage.

Another handicap was the National Phonograph Company's bringing out late in 1908 an Edison wax cylinder, with 200 lines to the inch, which would play four minutes or longer. Edison and his associates of course hailed the long-playing cylinder as the last word in convenience and perfect reproduction. These claims, however, brought a testy retort from the irascible "Lancashire Ladie," J. E. Hough, manager of the Edison Bell Consolidated Phonograph Company, Inc., which constantly did battle in the British courts with its American competitor. Snorted Mr. Hough in a full-page ad, in the December, 1908, issue of the *Talking Machine News*:

"Two hundred thread records to run four minutes were manufactured for sale by the Edison Bell seventeen years ago. There is no novelty or invention in them . . . Two hundred thread records cannot be used on more than 5 to 10 per cent of all the cylinder machines now in public use in Great Britain . . . All owners of these will not be likely to pay the heavy fee to have their machines mechanically altered to suit this new fad . . . There is no assurance of success. The sacrifice of volume and tone, and the reduced wearing qualities possibly attendant upon finer and shallower recording, are serious matters for consideration."

But Mr. Hough made it clear that he

would meet competition. "The Edison Bell," he said, "have re-commenced the manufacture of these fine line Records, and as their cylinders are $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch longer than the Americans, their 200 thread Record will run five or six minutes . . . The Edison Bell 200 thread Records . . . will be named Chrystol Records. The price will be One Shilling; there is no mechanical or artistic reason for any increase."

Whenever the unhappy publisher of the *Talking Machine News* printed an advertisement of either Edison or Edison Bell he was likely to have to apologize to the other firm. So in the January, 1909, issue was displayed this half-page ad.: "An advertisement appearing in the last issue of the 'T.M.N.' was the means — inadvertently — of giving umbrage to the National Phonograph Company, Limited. We regret its insertion."

The same issue contained an announcement that Edison Bell had experienced one of the several disastrous fires that plagued its career and that its Chrystol Records would be "somewhat delayed" in production. They never appeared, as the company turned its attention more and more to discs. In justice to Mr. Hough, it should be said that his strictures concerning the reduced volume and poor wearing qualities of four-minute wax cylinders were entirely correct, as anybody with experience of the Edison product knows. In 1912, Mr. Edison abandoned the wax cylinders for his fine unbreakable Blue Amberols. But by that time the United States and Indestructible Record Companies were both producing wear-proof four-minute cylinders.

The "Packman Cut"

Longer-playing experiments were also being carried out in the disc field. One of the most promising was the Marathon record, introduced in England in 1913 by D. J. Packman. The records were said to be of the "Packman cut," from the name of their inventor. They were hill and dale and played with an ordinary needle. The grooves, however, were so fine that more than eight minutes could be recorded on each side of a twelve-inch record without any appreciable loss of volume or good acoustic tone quality. I have one of these records, and its quality is better than that of the average lateral-cut of its period. The Marathon company went

out of existence a year or so after the first World War began, but in the early 1920's another long-playing record in whose development Packman was concerned was marketed in England. It was the World record, made under "the Pemberton-Billings patents." In playing it some sort of a "controller" had to be used to regulate the speed, so I judge that it ran at fewer revolutions per minute than ordinary records. Critics said its tone quality was poor and it soon ceased to be heard of.

The "Marveola"

For many years not much, if anything, was done in the United States to produce long playing discs, although a few devices to play several ordinary records automatically were announced. Apparently none was satisfactory. Among these was the Weser Brothers' Marveola automatic phonograph, invented by John A. Weser and introduced in 1918. This eccentric appearing affair was operated electrically and played, if it were working right, from one to six 10 or 12-inch records by pressing a button. The description sounds something like that of the Complete Song Singer for cylinders: "The six records are played in succession, the mechanism automatically shifting them under the reproducing point, and pausing, if desired, for an interval between each rendition. A control button will start, stop or discharge any particular selection at any time, or will repeat any record, or part of a record, at will, the machinery shifting to the succeeding record automatically, or at the will of the operator."

In 1926, after his New Edison Diamond Disc phonograph and records had been hard hit by competition from radio and new-fangled electric recording, Thomas A. Edison turned his attention to producing a long-playing record. This was announced with what, for Edison, was a considerable advertising splurge. The records had 450 grooves to the inch. Ten-inch discs played for 12 minutes a side and 12-inch ones for 20 minutes each. A special reproducer with a minutely fine diamond point was used and a gear shifting device had to be attached to the mechanism of the Edison instrument to make the machinery track properly. The announcement said that the way was now open for complete symphonies, song recitals,

and more all on a single record.

Unfortunately, the symphonies didn't materialize, although I have been told that a New York man possesses an Edison Long Playing record of Beethoven's *Fifth*, which was never catalogued or officially announced. Nothing of much consequence was issued. It was found impossible to do direct recording for 20 minutes at a stretch and so the records were all dubbed from regular Diamond Discs, with some loss of volume and tone quality. Harvey Hindermeyer, the tenor, told me of the sad experience that he and Earl Tuckerman had, trying to make a 20-minute record. They got 19 and a half minutes done when a train passed in the distance and blew loudly enough to be recorded, ruining the record. On the next try, they got to the 19-minute point when somebody opened the studio door, slammed it — and the sound was recorded. Hindermeyer and Tuckerman quit right there, and so did the recording experts. Edison went out of the record business in 1929. Meanwhile, the long playing records had been a flat failure from the standpoint of public appeal. The year, 1926, saw also the introduction of the automatic Orthophonic Victrola which sold for \$600 and would play twelve records consecutively — unless it took a notion, as it sometimes did, to hurl the records across the room.

Romeo Enters the Field

In the late 1920's and early 1930's a few tentative experiments were made with longer-playing discs. Brunswick produced a few excellent 12-inch recordings that played for six minutes, and I have a 10-inch Romeo record, bought in a five-and-ten cent store, which plays for five minutes on each side, with quality every bit as good as that of an ordinary three-minute pressing.

By 1931, radio and the depression combined had almost written the obituary notice for the phonograph and record business. In July of that year, the H. Royer Smith Company's house organ, *Disques*, discussing the sad state of the industry, came to the conclusion that "what is needed to restore the record business to its former flourishing state is a long-playing record, a disc that will, without losing any of the quality of tone to which we are now accustomed, play at least an entire movement from a symphony with-

out a pause . . . Precisely how it could be achieved, of course, we do not profess to know; we do not even know whether or not it is mechanically possible."

Despite that disclaimer, the writer must have been given an advance tip that something new was about to be introduced, because there is an announcement in the October, 1931, issue about RCA-Victor's plans for a new long playing record. The following excerpt which appeared stressed its "revolutionary" nature.

Victor's Announcement

"The process by which the playing time of a 12-inch record can be increased to over three times its ordinary length . . . consists of increasing the number of grooves on the record and reducing the speed of the turn-table revolutions from 78 to 33-1/3 per minute . . . To make this finer grooving possible, a new material, called Victrolac, will be used for the 12-inch long-playing records. This material, which is flexible and hence not likely to crack or warp, has never before been utilized for phonograph records; and it is believed that it will represent a marked improvement on materials now in use, since it is practically unbreakable, tests have proved it to possess extraordinary wearing qualities, and, finally, there is very little surface noise. Since the grooves on the new records will be much closer together, needles with finer points will be necessary."

Yet when the "Program Transcriptions", as they were called, appeared in record stores they failed miserably to rejuvenate the doddering record industry. The fact that these new discs, in the beginning, were all dubbed from standard Victor records and did not have as much volume as the regular ones proved an immediate drawback. Complaints of persistent pitch wavers, probably caused by slow-speed motors not running steadily, were soon voiced on all sides. Deterioration in tone quality was particularly marked in the last half of these records.

After more experimenting, the records were improved. Grooves were spaced wider, at the expense of playing time. Direct recording was done. But still the discs did not sell. They disappeared from the Victor catalogue in the mid-1930's.

However, there were all indications as time progressed that Victor laboratories continued

to experiment with long-playing records. Prior to the war, as mentioned by Robert S. Lanier in his article *Discs Versus Films*, printed in the October 1941 issue of this periodical, it was rumored that fine-grooved discs would shortly make their appearance. Victor, in conjunction with the National Broadcasting Company, had developed fine-grooved transcriptions, the recording technique of which — according to one sound engineer — laid the basis for the fine-grooved or "microgrooved" records, as Columbia has chosen to call them. It can be assumed that the lack of essential reproducing equipment was the deterrent to the production of the long-playing records at that time. Once the war began, production was side-tracked as RCA Victor was 100-percent preoccupied with war work. Lanier's description of the promised disc is of interest. He said: "Principal among the new interlocking developments (in the record field), which have been successfully demonstrated by technicians but have not become available to the purchaser of reproduction equipment are the following: (1) a smooth-material disc, which is *not* used to grind the point of the needle down to fit the groove, but designed for the absolute minimum of friction; (2) a practical dynamic pickup of greatly refined moving parts, with lowered pressure and a permanent jewel-point of considerably smaller diameter than in use; (3) recording with a very fine groove, which will give positive 'side-wall' drive to the stylus point mentioned above, and (4) recording at a lower overall volume level, made possible by the quietness of a really smooth record surface."

Today, it would appear, history was repeating itself, with Columbia issuing a new "revolutionary" disc which follows the footsteps of others. This time, however, Columbia has had the advantage of 17 years of technical advances in the industry since the last long-playing disc was offered to the public. Both Victor's 1931 and Columbia's 1948 long-playing discs are virtually radio transcriptions, 10- and 12-inch in size, instead of 16-inch. Like the Victors, the new Columbias must be played at a slower speed with a special sized needle point, and the material in both is unbreakable and of remarkably smooth surface.

There is no reason to believe that the new Columbia discs are not every bit as good as

advance publicity represents them if played on or with really good reproducing equipment. They are the result of experiments and research covering a good many years. Their cost appears high on first thought, even in these days of soaring prices, but acutally they represent a considerable saving in money as compared to the cost of an album of several records, and the small amount of room they take up will come as a godsend to collectors with limited storage space.

So, though it may seem only a case of history repeating itself, here's a warm welcome to Columbia's microgroove records, which are arriving — like Victor's fore-runners — at a time when the record business has low blood-pressure and badly needs a shot in the arm.

Collectors' Records

MEYERBEER: *Gli Ugonotti* — *Aria del Paggio*; and GOUNOD: *Roméo et Juliette* — *Aria de Stephano*; Josephine Jacoby. IRCC 10-inch disc 3033, price \$1.75.

MOZART: *Don Juan* — *Sérénade*; Jean La-salle, and (a) MEYERBEER: *Fragment* from *Les Huguenots*; Nellie Melba (1901); (b) STRAUSS: *Fragment* from *Voce di primavera*; Marcella Sembrich (1900), IRCC 10-inch disc 3034, price \$1.75.

BELLINI: *Norma* — *Ah! rispetti*; and MOZART: *Così fan tutte* — *Prenderò quel brunetino*; Lilli Lehmann and Hedwig Helbig. IRCC 10-inch discs 3035, price \$1.75.

VERDI: *Otello* — *Era la notte*; and *Falstaff* — *Quand' ero paggio*; Victor Maurel. IRCC 3036, price \$1.75.

DONIZETTI: *Don Pasquale* — *Cercherò lontano terra*; Alessandro Bonci, and MAS-CAGNI: *La Maschera* — *Io sono come nube vaporosa*; Giuseppe Anselmi. IRCC 10-inch disc 3037, price \$1.75.

STARR: *Rastus Take Me Back*; Marie Dressler, and SUTTON: *I Don't Care*; Eva Tanguay. IRCC 12-inch 5017, price \$2.25.

● IRCC has well served the history of the phonograph and that of its parade of singers through the years since its foundation in 1932. As Mr. Miller said in his review of a recent list, "histrionically each of the selections has more than ordinary interest". Quite a few old-timers will get a kick out of hearing the voice of Eva Tanguay in her famous theme

song, *I Don't Care*, though the reproduction is not as clear as Marie Dressler's song about the colored lady that imbibed not too wisely nor too well. Dressler in person was far funnier than from the record and Tanguay considerably more ebullient. These are novelties of by-gone days that seem a bit tame in our own time.

The prize disc this month from IRCC contains the two duets by Lilli Lehmann and her niece, Hedwig Helbig. The *Norma* excerpt from the finale of Act I offers some amazing singing from a woman of 59. Twice she renders a chromatic scale from high C to middle G without the usual *portamento* so many sopranos indulge in. In both duets, Lehmann provides a lesson in the art of singing. Next, the Bonci-Anselmi disc offers fine examples of two famous tenor's style in lyric arias, with Anselmi stealing the honors for his smooth and more dulcet delivery.

The fragments by Melba and Sembrich, taken from Mapleson cylinders made at the Metropolitan, are exceptionally well recorded despite the old surface problems. The Melba offers some ringing high Ds and one of those incomparable trills, for which she was famous, on a high A. The Sembrich, without accompaniment, is less impressive. The noted French baritone, Jean Lassalle, reveals his age in the *Don Juan*, though his performance has a dignity befitting the nobleman impersonated. The piano accompaniment almost sounds like a mandoline.

Miss Jacoby's selections taken from old Edison cylinders offer only small parts of both arias. Hers was an appealing mezzo-soprano with considerable sweetness of tone, but I cannot say I like her consistent use of rallentando.

The Victor Maurel *Falstaff* is better recorded than the one of which Mr. Miller speaks in his copy below, and its *Otello* coupling has greater interest both musically and historically. Maurel was the famous Iago, yet Sammarco was later to sing the best recorded version I have ever heard of *Cassio's Dream* (Italian G. & T. 052039). It is a record which deserved to be re-recorded.

—J.N.

Collectors Record Shop, under the guidance of Jack L. Caidin, has for some years been quietly building up a list of historical recordings, issued in unlimited editions. Recently, in a burst of activity, the number of these releases has shot up to 63. They are available through the larger record stores throughout the country. For the most part these discs are re-recordings of acoustic originals, though some have apparently been taken from broadcasts in more recent years, and there are several mementoes of Giuseppe de Luca's recital in Town Hall, New York, November 7, 1947. The older recordings have been dubbed with great skill; the voices for the most part are clear and forward. Some are pressed on plastic material and some on shellac, all have surprisingly quiet

surfaces. Some are 10-inch discs and some 12, but all retail at \$2.10 including tax. Comparing a number of them with original pressings of the same selections I found in most cases only a little of the bloom was gone from the voices. As the originals are all exceptionally rare, the job of reproduction was certainly well worth doing. One feature which did not altogether please me was the fade-in and fade-out technique employed. Unsatisfactory as the old orchestras and pianos were in reproduction, I would still like the arias to begin at the beginning and to end at the end.

Naturally only a hasty glance over so formidable a list is possible here, but the best of these records certainly deserves attention. Starting at the top of the list — that is with the sopranos — the Nordica disc (CRS 36) has perhaps the greatest interest. The air from Erkel's opera *Hunyadi László*, sung in Hungarian, shows the range and flexibility of this singer's voice perhaps more successfully than any other from her not too satisfactory list. The companion piece, Stange's song *Damon*, sung for some reason in English though the text is by Goethe, gives an impression of more than usual vocal purity and vitality, though it could hardly be mistaken for the work of a young singer. Salome Kruceniski, in two airs from *Adriana Lecouvreur* (CRS 25) shows a fine voice, beautiful style and striking temperament. Emmy Destinn's voice in the two double-sided selections issued, seems to me one case of overshooting in the re-recording. Naturally big and voluptuous, her tones call for space, and the impression here is of too great proximity. The selections are extremely valuable, however, as *Aida*, from which she sings *Ritorna Vincitor* (CRS 63) was one of her great operas, and the prayer *Leise, leise*, from *Der Freischütz* (CRS 44) shows a less familiar side of her art as well as certain limitations. Eugenia Burzio has been no more than a name in Bauer's catalogue to most collectors, though I understand she was greatly admired by no less an authority than Toscanini. In two scenes from *Otello* (CRS 26) she reveals an unmistakably superior voice but also no little emotional overloading. Olive Fremstad's records have always been numbered among the more desirable rarities, though admittedly they give no more than a hint of her greatness. In Sieglinde's *Du bist der Lenz* and Brünnhilde's *Ho-jo-to-ho!* both from *Die Walkure*, the voice is clear and vital, if a little distant (CRS 21). Of course the playing of the all-important orchestral part does not help the illusion.

Outstanding among the contraltos is Marie Delna, for so many years a chief ornament of the Paris Opéra. Her account of *J'ai perdu mon Euridice* is quite disappointing; she seems somehow to wallow in the grief she should rise above. Perhaps her slow *tempo* explains the manner of other French contraltos in this music, though even this is not maintained throughout. And to cap it all she adds a high note at the end. The reverse of the disc, *O mon Fernand* from *Favorita*, is better sung, but none too successfully recorded (CRS 60). After

this it is a pleasure to report that the quality of her voice and her superb *legato* make something new and moving of the *Berceuse* from *Jocelyn*, (though again the recording leaves something to be desired) and despite a rapid *tempo* dictated by the exigencies of recording, her *Ah! mon fils* should not be missed (CRS 42).

Hipolito Lazaro's phenomenal tenor voice is displayed, complete with high D-flat, in a piece from *I Puritani* and, not quite so successfully in *Di quella pira* from *Trovatore* (CRS 18). More appealing in quality is Amadeo Bassi in passages from Giordano's *Fedora* and *Siberia* (CRS 29) though the recording is primitive even for 1906, and the piano accompaniment — played, I believe, by the composer, though the labels do not so state — is not of the smoothest. Fernando de Lucia is shown in the last years of his career (1917-22, when he is about turning sixty) with the vocal quality very much as we know it in the earlier recordings (CRS 33). The air from *L'Amico Fritz* shows his style to better advantage than that from *Manon Lescaut*. Another tenor of parts, known in Italy as Edoardo di Giovanni, but on this side of the world as plain Edward Johnson, gives us another piece from *Manon Lescaut* as well as the famous lament from *Pagliacci* (CRS 22). Always a fine stylist, Johnson made better acoustics for Victor, and his Canadian Victor electric *Vesti la giubba* ranks among the best versions of that overworked number. However, these are no longer to be had. The great Leo Slezak contributes two discs to our list. The famous *Ah, Mathilda* from *William Tell* (CRS 58) with its progressively rising tonality, is worth consideration (though IRCC once issued a smoother recording made for a different company — IRCC 172, not 3018 which is the same as this and like this coupled with Raoul's *Entrance* from *Les Huguenots*). CRS 24 is more interesting, as it contains the *Death Scene* from Slezak's celebrated performance of *Otello* coupled with an amazingly lyrical *Celeste Aida* sung in German. The early singing of Richard Tauber falls gratefully on the ear in the *Italian Aria* from *Rosenkavalier* (CRS 50) — and this is the best record I know of the music — coupled with an unmanured German performance of *Adieu Mignon* from the Thomas opera. A great voice is revealed within the restricted frame of CRS 31, on which Edoardo Ferrari-Fontana gives two selections from his noted role in *The Jewels of the Madonna*.

Giuseppe de Luca is represented in a before and after sequence. His fine vital singing of *Dinorah* and *Barbiere di Siviglia* airs (1906) reveals his voice in full bloom, with a youthfulness it no longer possessed when he made his fine artistically polished series of Victor acoustics (CRS 35). In strong contrast are the three discs taken from his 1947 Town Hall recital. It could hardly be surprising that these records are uneven, or that they show the singer's seventy-one years even more than did his studio recording made about that time for Decca. The wonderful thing is that he still had so much to give. The best of the lot is *Quand' ero paggio* from *Falstaff* (CRS 55) though there

are things to admire in the Italianized *Flea Song* from *La damnation de Faust* (CRS 54) and *Aprite un po' gli occhi* from *Le Nozze de Figaro* (CRS 53) despite some stylistic exaggerations. Superb *legato* and perfection of diction mark Maurice Renaud's account of a *Favorita* aria and a Gounod song. This is not the recording of *Le soir* which remained for years in the Victor catalogue, but an earlier one, piano accompanied, somewhat fresher in voice, though less smoothly recorded (CRS 39). Victor Maurel's inimitable *Quand' ero paggio* (sung three times, twice in Italian and once in French to the vociferous delight of a studio audience) is perhaps his most valuable memorial. Unfortunately here it is coupled with a heavy and halting "reading" (one can hardly believe he was a famous *Don Giovanni*) of *Deh vieni alla finestra* (CRS 30). David Bispham shows up unaccustomedly singing in Italian *Il balen* from *Trovatore* and *Dio possente* from *Faust* (CRS 37).

CRS 51 contrasts the Léon Rothier of 1910 with the well remembered artist of 1939. His singing of the *Sérénade* from *La damnation de Faust* seems rather heavy and unsubtle; one prefers to recall the superb diction and the authentic style of the *Berceuse* from *Louise*, with its spoken announcement, obviously taken from the air. For sheer tone Vittorio Arimondi had few rivals among bassos, a fact well demonstrated in the *Porter Song* from *Martha* and the *Serenade* from *Faust*. (CRS 27). However, there is strong competition from Hypolite Belhomme (CRS 38 and 40) especially on the second disc which contains the amusing *Air du chasseur* from *Dinorah* (complete with horn) and an unfamiliar bit from *Le Caid*. Other challengers are Paul Aumonier (CRS 46) with truly French performances of Meyerbeer's adaptation of *Ein feste Burg* and the once popular *Pif! Paf!*, both from *Huguenots*, and José Mardones doing the second of these airs in Italian along with the *Invocation* from *Robert le Diable* (CRS 34). Virgillio Lazzari is heard in a 1948 performance of the first-act narrative from a little recorded masterpiece, *L'Amore dei tre re*, which is coupled with a 1920 *La calunnia* from *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* (CRS 52), and a *Madamina* from *Don Giovanni* dated 1940, probably taken from an opera broadcast, but faded in after the first phrase. Finally Adamo Didur, at the height of his vocal powers, gives assured and alive performances of two *Freischütz* arias done into Italian (CRS 28) and somewhat later but still impressive singing in *Infelice* from *Ernani* and the *Porter Song* from *Martha* (CRS 41).

Other artists represented include the rather white-voiced Elvira de Hidalgo in Spanish songs by de Falla and Chapi (CRS 57); the great Claudia Muzio in two unimportant martial songs (CRS 56); the soprano Gertrude Runge in two arias from *Die Fledermaus* (CRS 62); the American dramatic mezzo-soprano Eleanor di Cisneros (born Eleanor Broadfoot) in not too impressive renditions of the *Wacht Lied* from *Tristan* and the *Battle Cry* from *Walkure* (CRS 48); Karen Branzell singing two airs from *Carmen* in German (recorded circa

1920) (CRS 23); Tito Schipa singing an unfamiliar aria from *Zaza* and revealing a youthful fervor in the last act duet, *Amaro sol per te*, from *Tosca* with the soprano Baldasare (CRS 47); Aureliano Pertile in well sung versions of arias from *Manon Lescaut* and *Lucia* (CRS 61); and Lauri-Volpi in the two *Tosca* arias for tenor (CRS 49). These latter date from 1917-19. Then there is the virile-voiced Riccardo Stracciari in airs from *Tosca* and *Ernani* (CRS 19 and 20); Mario Ancona (CRS 45) in an earlier *Eri tu* which rather pales before the smoother rendition he gave of the same air in 1907, now available in Victor's Heritage Series (15-1002); and finally the voice of Sarah Bernhardt reciting a *Prière pour nos enemies* (made in 1918) which makes one wonder how so impassioned an actress could ever have lasted out a full evening (CRS 10). —P.L.M.

Editorial Notes

(Continued from page 2)

droplets may be left on the surface, giving the record when dry a spotted appearance."

The advantage of 14 or 16 inch discs, of which Mr. Weil speaks, would have assured better reproduction of "highs" from inner grooves. On the ordinary 78 r.p.m. record the loss of highs as the needle traverses into the inner grooves may be gradual, though it is assured. If there are 10,000 frequencies at the 11-inch circle, these are reduced to 8,000 by the time the pickup reaches the 8-inch circle, and at the 6-inch circle we hear few frequencies exceeding 5,500. With the speed of the motor reduced to 33-1/3 r.p.m. the loss of highs across the record — we are told — is considerably more. Those interested in this subject are referred to the article *Frequencies in Recording, In Reproduction*, published in our May 1942 issue (still available), or to the October 1940 issue of *Communications*, from which we drew information for our article, where a more technical discussion of the subject appears.

A number of manufacturers are placing equipment on the market for performance of these records, and one leading phonograph-radio concern (Magnavox) has announced for early availability a new model combination providing performance of regular and long-playing records. Webster also has currently available a new player with matching separate amplifier for those who want it, and it is reported that they will bring out a two-speed machine with changer in the near future.

There seems no reason why the reproduc-

tion of long-playing records cannot be successfully arranged on almost anyone's machine without recourse to purchase of a special player. It is rumored that changer manufacturers will soon have two-way motors for use with their equipment. If the consumer can arrange for perfect operation of a two-way motor on his present equipment, he will only need to buy a special pickup. Many of the leading manufacturers have made or will make available on the market, pickups with extended range to do full justice to these records. The Audak Company has developed an excellent two-way pickup with full frequency range for performance of both 78 r.p.m. and long-playing discs. Pickering is marketing a long-playing head, interchangeable with its regular one, and Astatic has a reasonably priced pickup and tone arm which gives better reproduction than the Philco unit. Columbia has announced that it will bring out at a later date a cartridge for its player which will produce the full frequency range.

The history of the long-playing record will come as a surprise to many, and we are gratified to publish Walsh's detailed survey which Max Weil read with considerable interest, while we were listening to record comparisons. "The fellow has all the facts," Mr. Weil remarked, "and I wouldn't add a word."

The commercial survival of the Microgroove disc depends on many factors. It can hardly be the sole product of one company and be a complete success. Fine-grooved (which is what "microgrooved" means) recording is not new and can be reproduced by other concerns. An official of one of the smaller companies, which is rapidly advancing to the front, informed us that it could duplicate any of its existent recordings in similar fine-grooved discs. Further, it could do direct recording in its studios, which suggests that equipment for fine-grooved records is not as limited as some writers would like us to believe.

In Europe, equipment limitations and shortages have prevented experiments along similar lines, though correspondents write us long-playing records have been considered in the offing for some time. We recently heard a group of Siemenn discs, made in Germany during and before the war, that had half-again as much music on a single side of a 78 r.p.m. record. Reproduction

was excellent and there was no evidence of breakdown of groove walls. However, it should be mentioned, these records were played with a modern light-weight pickup (approximately 24 grams) with a jewel stylus. Breakdown of groove walls would probably occur with heavier pickups and too-wide stylus points. The Siemenn discs heard were said to be from the personal collection of Adolf Hitler. If this is true, their condition suggests that the much harassed Hitler did not find time to play them often. Siemenn records would seem to be largely extinct and whether some of their famous issues, like

the complete recording of Weber's *Der Freischuetz* with Maria Mueller as Agathe, will ever materialize commercially remains doubtful.

* * *

We wish to inform readers that our publication date was unavoidably delayed this month by strikes in the envelope and New York trucking industries, both of whose services we naturally rely upon heavily. Nevertheless, we have made every effort to get the magazine to you with the least possible delay, and will continue to do so in the future.



RECORD NOTES AND REVIEWS



BRAHMS: *Academic Festival Overture, Op. 80*; Boston Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Serge Koussevitzky. Victor disc 12-0377, price \$1.25.

▲Undoubtedly intended as a replacement of the Bruno Walter-Vienna Philharmonic version (Victor disc 12190), this performance is better recorded but lacking in some of the joviality and carefree qualities of its predecessor. Koussevitzky seems a bit too businesslike in his concern with texture. In the first of the student song themes, *Wir hatten gebauet ein staliches Haus* (heard in the brasses and woodwinds), Walter is less rigid and his is the more affectionate handling of the second song theme, *Der Landeswater* (heard in strings). In the latter section of the overture, Koussevitzky almost makes Brahms sound like Wagner. It would seem

that the conductor born and brought up with the student's songs, from which Brahms took his themes, was nearer to the heart of this essential German music.

DVORAK (arr. Szell): *Slavonic Dances Nos. 1, 3, 4, 8 and 10, Opp. 46, and 72*; The Cleveland Orchestra, conducted by George Szell. Columbia set M or MM-756, three discs, price \$4.75.

▲Szell's arrangement of these dances does not seem to depart in any striking way from the originals. His performances are rather hard-driven and lacking in the rhythmic subtlety and variation of the Czech conductor, Talich. On a low frequency machine, the reproduction was not impressive, but on extended-range equipment it had brightness and a clearer detail which proved an advance over other recordings. Szell has selected five of the best dances, though considering the number of extraneous recordings of several (especially No. 1 and 10), he might have chosen better. Yet, it should be noted, his

performance of *No. 10* — a Mazurka with gypsy-like characteristics — is one of his most persuasive renditions. Though Dvorak does not indicate many changes of tempi in his scores, the dances are usually performed with considerable variability of rhythm, but none on records have proved more satisfactory in this respect than Talich.

It has always seemed to me that the true embodiment of Dvorak's genius lies in his spontaneous and sparkling *Slavonic Dances*, in which the composer evokes the spirit of a Czech Pan making one think of summer fields and woods and village greens.

GERSHWIN: *An American in Paris*; RCA Victor Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Leonard Bernstein. Victor set DM-1237, two discs, price \$3.50 (manual \$4.50).

▲Superb recording with an acoustic liveliness, fine balance and smooth record surfaces makes this performance immediately attractive to the listener. The youthful Bernstein gives this essentially youthful music the proper buoyance and charm of sentiment. His is a more spontaneous and open-hearted performance than the recent Rodzinski one, and the reproduction is more sharply etched. Gershwin's panorama of Paris boulevards is a holiday picture, depicting a visiting stranger, whose origin could hardly be mistaken, absorbed in the external sights and sounds of the famous city. For all the communicable Gallic gaiety and freedom, the nostalgia of youth intrudes and memories of another city manifest themselves, but not for long as in the end it is the festive externality of Paris that prevails. Music of light weight, yet so unmistakably filled with the fervor of young America that one understands why it communicates so much to so many. —P.H.R.

STRAVINSKY: *Danses Concertantes* (1942); RCA-Victor Chamber Orchestra, conducted by Igor Stravinsky. Victor DM-1234, three discs, \$4.75. (manual \$5.75.)

▲This, Stravinsky's first score completely written in America, was composed for the Janssen Symphony of Los Angeles and first performed by them in February, 1942. The following year it entered the repertory of the Ballet Russe, with Balanchine choreography.

Stravinsky is said to have conceived the work as an attempt to freshen up classical ballet attitudes, and to offer an ironic commentary on the grotesque sequences of absurd poses which disfigured much recent traditional ballet.

The ballet, a charming and refreshing piece, was enjoyable. On records, however, Stravinsky's score drops somewhat below the enjoyable stage, and comes off as a pallid reworking of old formulas. Though I generally admire the sureness of Stravinsky's craftsmanship, his uncannily perceptive orchestration, his fascinating manipulation of rhythms, which the *Danses Concertantes* reveals to a great degree, the work on records does not sustain my interest. There is nothing unpleasant or unpredictable in the score. It is light, tuneful in a clumsy sort of way — too flippant without being really funny, and on the whole too labored and self-conscious.

Stravinsky's skill as an interpreter of his own music has developed strongly in late years, and he shapes his score carefully. The filler is his lightweight *Scherzo à la Russe*, a piece originally written for Paul Whiteman. The recording of both selections is resonant and sharply-defined, the surfaces better than Victor's average.

STRAVINSKY: *Symphony of Psalms* (1930); London Philharmonic Orchestra and Choir, conducted by Ernest Ansermet. Decca (FFRR) EDA-52, 3 records, \$7.00.

▲Written for the 50th year of the Boston Symphony and first performed by Koussevitzky (twice on the same program, incidentally), this "Symphony" is probably Stravinsky's most debated work since *Le Sacre*. The mixture of styles here is certainly arresting: moments of severe, orthodox piety give way to barbaric orchestral outbursts. The broad and serene peroration has been characterized as a ludicrous parody of plainchant: the mood of the entire work has been called sacrilegious and charlatan.

To this listener the score is an attempt which is not wholly successful, but makes its points skillfully and at times fluently. There is more direct emotional appeal than in any other Stravinsky work of the period, but there is an overtone of mawkishness, especially in the finale, that destroys much of the total effect. The elements of the great Stravinsky . . . the rhythmic complexity,

contrapuntal skill, superlative manipulation of color masses . . . will be noted here in abundance.

Ansermet's skill as a conductor of Stravinsky has been observed in his previous FFRR recordings, and a finer exposition of the "Psalms" is almost inconceivable. Ansermet sees the work as a whole, and his building toward the conclusion is a model of steadily mounting impact. I have heard no American performances matching his for overall restraint and for respecting the outlines of the music. His chorus seems somewhat overlarge, but the balance of performing groups has been well-planned. The orchestra plays extraordinarily well, with a special mention to the oboist's statement of the fugal subject. Decca's recording is kinder to orchestra than to chorus, but the overall effect is indeed resplendent. —A.R.

VAUGHAN WILLIAMS: *Fantasia on a Theme by Tallis*; Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Dimitri Mitropoulos. Columbia set X or MX-300, two discs, price \$3.50.

▲ In reviewing this work previously, I pointed out that it is music more ethereal than substantial, despite the use of chords of great proportion. More often than not its drama is hushed, for the mood remains one of inner reflection. Taking a tune in an ecclesiastical mode by the 16th-century composer, Thomas Tallis, Vaughan Williams has written a score that partakes of two worlds—the bygone era of Tallis and the modern age. In my estimation, this is one of the loveliest and most sensitive works to come out of modern England. The arrangement of the strings recalls the concerto grosso of former times for a solo string quartet is here pitted against a double string orchestra or *Tutti*. Vaughan Williams has an appreciation, rare in our own time, for serenity and it is this quality — one of the great ones least found in modern art — that recommends his *Fantasia* to me. As the English writer, Scott Goddard has said: "For the listener who can give himself to this music it has the force of a revelation, the immediacy of the mystic's vision . . . what Elgar's *Gerontius* may be to the Roman Catholic this work may be for spirituality to the Protestant".

The strings of the Minneapolis Symphony, used alone in this work, are warm-toned and

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well reproduced. Comparing this with an earlier version by Boult and the B.B.C. Symphony (Victor set 769) one finds here finer gradations of tone. Mitropoulos handles the music with an affectionate hand, giving it on occasion a sensuousness of sound almost romantic in quality, which may well make the work more immediately appealing to some listeners.

VIVALDI (arr. Molinari): *The Four Seasons* (for strings, cembalo and organ). *Op. 8*; Orchestra of the Academy of St. Cecilia, conducted by Bernardino Molinari. Cetra automatic set 107, six discs, price \$16.00.

▲ This is the most elaborate work of Vivaldi's to be recorded to date. Historically, its importance as one of the earliest detailed and elaborate Nature tonal-paintings of its time cannot be refuted, though musically it does not reveal the composer in as consistently high a light as the *A major Concerto (L'Echo in lontano)*, recently reviewed, or as the concertos *No. 8* and *11* from his *Opus 3*. Though called *concerti grossi* in the 18th century, these works are true forerunners of the modern symphonic poem. Each is based on a sonnet about the four seasons. The best of the concertos are *Spring* and *Autumn*. The joyous verve at the opening of *Spring* has a spontaneity and freshness which is immediately appealing. The twittering of birds and the thunder and lightning are by no means over-exploited, yet on first acquaintance they prove only mildly diverting. A slow middle section, depicting the sleeping goatheard, has unusually saccharine sentiment for Vivaldi, but with the resumption of the festive motive of the opening the spontaneity is restored. In the second concerto, *Summer*, the composer imitates the sounds of various birds and later depicts a swarm of flies disturbing the slumbering shepherd. *Autumn* brings the festival of Bacchus and a hunting scene. The notes supply the first poem and only sketches of the others, so one must guess the composer's intentions in the slow parts of the other concertos. That of the second suggests an idyl of summer lassitude, redolent with its fragrant sweetness. *Autumn's* is more contemplative, and the most beautiful of the four slow sections. In *Winter*, Vivaldi imitates the shivering characteristics of the season, the walkers on the ice moving

cautiously, boldly, then slipping and falling. Here the composer's realism is deftly handled in the strings. Later, the ice breaks and melts, and the work ends with "Boreas and all the winds at war" in a brilliant finale.

Vivaldi in modern times is praised for the qualities which 18th-century critics censured, his exploitation of the facility of the players more especially the violin virtuoso. A forward-looking composer, revealing imagination in his development of ensemble music, he brought greater dramatic contrast to the concerto, an ardor and brilliance to his outer movements, and an intimate tenderness to his slow ones. There is much to admire in *The Four Seasons* which offers many manifestations of the composer's best qualities, though one feels that the explicit paraphrase of some of the poetic material dampened his inspiration. The poems tend to the triteness and conventionality of many of their period. Molinari, who arranged these works for modern performance, is of the belief that Vivaldi wrote the sonnets himself. If this is true, Vivaldi was a more farsighted musician than poet.

Most of us will undoubtedly experiment with Vivaldi on any ground, and I feel familiarity will not breed discontent. The ideal and most enjoyable manner to hear these concertos, in my estimation, is to program one season at a time.

The performance is admirable for its refinement of detail and spirited ensemble work. The orchestra, a chamber ensemble, is not as proficient as some other Italian groups and there are a few tonal blemishes. The reproduction is well defined, though the range is not an extended one. —P.H.R.

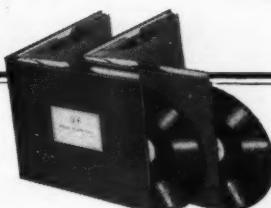


POULENC: *Concerto in D Minor for Two Pianos and Orchestra*; Arthur Whittemore and Jack Lowe, pianists, with Dimitri Mitropoulos and the RCA-Victor Symphony Orchestra. Victor DM-1235; three 12" records; \$4.75 (manuel \$5.75).

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earthy *Mass in G* — fail to give a complete picture of the composer, and this issue is therefore welcome.

Poulenc emerges here as a facile, witty, and enormously adroit creator of interesting sound. This concerto, which moves with a tremendous vitality, is thought out along a fairly conventional plan.

It is consistently good clean fun, all very charming, and occasionally even beautiful. You might play the slow movement to your friends and have them guessing it is Mozart for about half a side. The finale might have come from Broadway (from one of the better musicals, to be sure). Accepting the music on its merit it becomes thoroughly enjoyable. For Poulenc has an uncanny gift for variety of expression which permits him to mate adroitly commonplace and serious elements.

Whittemore and Lowe have been contributing some highly ingratiating work on the lighter repertory, and this rather extensive tidbit fits their talents splendidly. Mitropoulos neatly handles the limited demands of the score, and the performance has been recorded with clarity and brilliance. —A.R.

VIEUXTEMPS: Concerto No. 5 in A minor, Op. 37; Jascha Heifetz (violin) and London Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Sir Malcolm Sargent. Victor set DM-1240, two discs, price \$3.50 (manual \$4.50).

▲Of the six concertos that Henri Vieuxtemps (1820-1881) wrote for his own use as a much heralded travelling virtuoso, only his fourth in *D minor* has held its place in the modern concert repertoire. Heifetz during a sojourn in England in 1936 recorded that work (Victor set 297), which was favorably reviewed by most critics of the time. The present concerto does not stand up too well; much of its sentiment and theatrical bravura is superficial with far too obvious echoes of Spohr and Paganini. One agrees with W. R. Anderson's observations in *The Gramophone* (January 1948 issue): "Not much of this pathos and melodrama, this marvelous popping about, is likely to stay with a body for permanent sustenance or solace; but accept it on its own meagre ground, and you can have a quarter-hour of thorough enjoyment, in this sparkling show of superlative violin playing". The

"sparkling show" is Heifetz's — a lustrous, vibrant and momentarily beguiling exhibition of regal artistry. The recording is splendid, though a bit heavy on the bass side for American machines. —P.H.R.



ALBENIZ: *Iberia*—Vols I and II; Claudio Arrau (piano). Columbia set DM-757, five discs, price \$7.25.

▲Our plea for a recording of Albeniz's *Iberia* (voiced in an article in our August-1943 issue, still available) has only lately been answered. Perhaps it is just as well that the answer comes now, as the quality of recording these days does greater justice to the subtle rhythms and coloring of these pieces. Columbia has provided as faithful a reproduction of Arrau and his piano as can be found on domestic records. Not since the pianist's valued pre-war Parlophone discs has he been better represented. Arrau has the true feel of this music; he substantiates its charm and just the right amount of its "unexpectedly intensified emotional appeal". Music, such as this, which relies on rhythm and color for its chief assets can be very easily over-exploited, and Arrau's artistic reserve is an attribute not very widely or wisely in vogue these days. It is a quality that notably serves *Evocation* as well as the more brilliant *El Corpus en Sevilla*.

Besides the four familiar excerpts from the first half of *Iberia* (there are four books), we have for the first time on records the *Rondena* and *Almeria*, both equally attractive. P.G., in his article on *Iberia*, discerningly stated, "Humanity and the simple beauties of Nature were Albéniz's loves", and added a fitting quote from Carl Van Vechten, "Spain and its landscapes were an inexhaustible source of inspiration to him [Albéniz]. More than half of his pieces bear the name of some village or region, pieces composed from day to day and dedicated to the town he was playing in . . . At times . . . he so breathed the spirit of a region into his music that it vied in popularity with the folk-songs of the place".

BACH: *Fantasia and Fugue in D major*; Guiomar Novaes (piano). Columbia set U or MU-298, two 10-inch discs, price \$2.90.

▲This work, more familiarly known as *Toccata and Fugue*, is of lesser stature than its predecessor in *C minor*, though it is more elaborate in style and fanciful in content. There is a close relationship between it and the *Italian Concerto*. There have been a number of recordings, notably Schnabel's piano version (in Victor set 532) and Landowska's harpsichord one (Victor discs 15171/72). Schnabel's performance was, as Nathan Broder said in review, "a powerful argument for the pianist, at least as far as the playing of Bach is concerned". The two adagio sections of the work were performed

"with such inwardness, such serenity, and poetry, and the fast parts with such sparkle and rhythmic verve and effortless technic, that it is hard to see how the performance could be bettered". Landowska's was equally impressive, though not so searchingly exploited in the slow sections, but her "highly vitalized" fast sections impeccably handled for detail and timing provided stimulating listening. I speak of these performances in the past tense because neither is listed in the catalogue at present, though I believe Landowska's is till available on H.M.V. discs in England.

Novaes provides a musical compensation that cannot be denied. Her performance is less brilliant in the fast sections than Landowska, but what may seem at first a reti-

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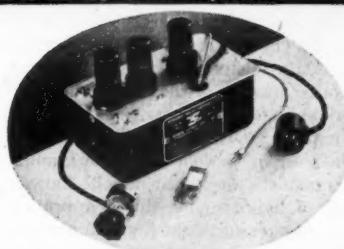
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cence is in truth a more delicate and sensitive approach. Her playing of the fugal parts is clean in detail, assured in timing though more suave than either of her predecessors. Those who own either of the earlier recordings may not be minded to exchange them for this one, but many present-day record buyers will unquestionably welcome this set. The reproduction is not a great advance over the 1938 issues though I find it an improvement over some previous issues of this artist.

—P.H.R.

BACH-LISZT: *Prelude and Fugue in A minor*; Byron Janis (piano). Victor disc 12-0379, price \$1.25.

▲ This is the "great" A minor Prelude and Fugue — Volume II, No. 8 in the Peters edition. No recent American recording is in existence, and the ones I remember go back to Mischa Levitzky-Percy Grainger days. As a matter of fact, the work, once so popular, has been neglected in the concert hall of late, and not many recitalists program it.

It is typical late-nineteenth-century arrangement of the sort that set the model for Tausig, Busoni and d'Albert. As these arrangements go, it is not bad. No more bombast than customary; plenty of work for the outer reaches of the hand; the usual octave doublings in the bass. Byron Janis, who is making his debut on Victor records, plays the piece quite well. I am not familiar with this pianist's work, but here he shows a neat pair of hands and a fluent approach. He takes the opening of the fugue at a rather fast pace; a slower tempo would have lent more breadth and dignity. It is competent playing all around, however. Future releases of different types of music will give a better indication of Mr. Janis' interpretive ability. Splendid recording, clear in detail.

CHOPIN: *Barcarolle in F sharp major (Op. 60)*; Artur Rubinstein (piano). Victor disc 12-0378, price \$1.25.

▲ About three generations ago, Wilhelm von Lenz dropped into Tausig's apartment to hear him play the *Barcarolle*. Not long after, he commemorated this meeting in a book which is responsible for one of the standard interpretations of Chopin's fine work. According to the flowery von Lenz, Tausig explained the *Barcarolle* in the following manner: "This tells of two persons, of a love scene in a secret gondola; we might call this *mise en scène* symbolic of lovers'

meetings in general. That is expressed in the thirds and sixths . . ." And so on. Also note the delicate touch here: "In this modulation into C sharp major (marked *dolce sfogato*) one recognizes a kiss and an embrace — that is plain enough."

Perhaps Rubinstein is not the pianist that Tausig was, but unfortunately the kiss and embrace are not plain enough. There are other vitures, though: beautiful recording, sympathy with the idiom, adequate power in the climaxes. The last domestic release of the *Barcarolle* dates from 1941. That was Giesecking's, to which I was never too kindly disposed. His playing may have been more technically exact than Rubinstein's is here, but there was little of the characteristic color and freedom Rubinstein possesses.

The latter's, as usual, is highly individual pianism. There is a rubato at the beginning of the *poco piu mosso* section that would be fatal for anybody to imitate, and he makes more of the left-hand chords in the last few measures than I have heard from any pianist. Admittedly, some of the bass is muddy and there are several blurred moments, but the sweep and poetry are there. Such personal playing, naturally, will result in an equally personal reaction, and I can easily understand the dislike with which some people will approach this disc. From this listener's point of view, however, it is big, sturdy playing of a big, sturdy piece.

SATIE: *Trois Morceaux En Forme De Poire*; Robert and Gaby Casadesus (duo-pianists). Columbia set MM-763, three 10-inch discs, price \$3.90.

▲ The definitive story of Eric Satie has yet to be written. He was an immensely important figure in French music of the early 1900's — not so much for his own compositions (though they exerted influence) as for his position as father-confessor to every *avant-garde* composer of the day. Satie must have been a man of pungent intellect, brilliant speech and infinite worldliness. The younger men like Ravel and Poulenc hung on every word he had to say, and his musical philosophy definitely swayed theirs. Satie looked on things with quizzical eye. He disliked pomp and excess; a keen satirist, he exposed the folly of his more pretentious colleagues. In his own music he strove for simplicity and an epigrammatic quality, partly because he could not handle the larger

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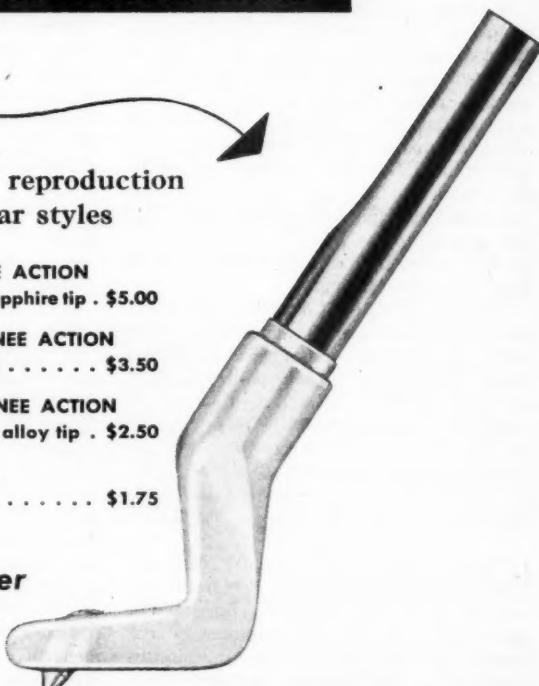
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forms (after all, he was a dilettante, raised to the nth degree) but mostly because he distrusted them.

A great composer? Of course not; but a fascinating one, whose highly personal, cultured, inbred speech should always appeal to the connoisseur. These *Trois morceux en forme de poire* (*Three pieces in the shape of a pear*) have a typically surrealist title. The story goes that Debussy accused his music of being without form, whereupon Satie wrote these sketches to confound the base allegation. As might be expected, the music is largely tongue in cheek, but there is more to it than merely that. There often is exquisite taste, sensitivity and atmosphere. Like a Pascin or Lautrec drawing, there is a sure, firm line, a polished urbanity. And, as those drawings are not as simple as they look, the music is not as simple as it sounds.

The title — *Trois morceux*, etc. — has of course no meaning in itself. The music has, though; and whether or not the charge of over-refinement, superficiality and "smart-alecism" may be levelled against it (all with a certain amount of justice), a few hearings should at least reveal the composer's delicate perceptions. Naturally, anybody approaching it with the Teutonic tradition as a criterion will not find much; but those who can appreciate the French literary-artistico-musical milieu of the early 1900's will find much that is rewarding.

Robert and Gaby Casadesus should be felicitated for their performance of the first really representative Satie work to be released in America. Their performance is apt, their ensemble uniform, their styles well matched. This set should be placed alongside the couple's previous recording of Chabrier's *Trois Valses Romantiques*, another piece of music in somewhat the same vein as this. May there be more of them. —H.C.S.

TCHAIKOVSKY (arr. Babin): Vronsky and Babin, duo-pianists. Columbia set M or MM-760, four discs, price \$6.00. ▲Delicate and facile performances of five familiar Tchaikovsky waltzes, ingeniously arranged by Mr. Babin. Amateur duo-pianists will find interest in these transcriptions. Familiarity with the waltzes originally written for orchestra may make these versions tonally pallid for some, but the accent being on sweetness and sentiment as-

sures this album a success. The selections are Waltz from *Serenade*, Op. 48; *Valse sentimentale*, Op. 51, No. 6; Waltz from *Eugen Onegin*; Waltz from *The Swan Lake*; and "Waltz of the Flowers" from *The Nutcracker Suite*. Recording is clear and well defined though lacking in room resonance.

—P.G.



DINICU (arr. Heifetz): *Hora Staccato*; and **MILHAUD**: *Tijuca* from *Saudades do Brasil*; Isaac Stern (violin) and Alexander Zakin (piano). Columbia 10-inch disc 17541-D, price \$1.00.

▲Stern plays both selections with an artistic excellence that marks him as one of the foremost violinists of our time. It is in the romantic Brazilian piece, previously unrecorded, that he will instantly captivate his hearers for his stylistic sensitivity. Though comparison with the Heifetz version of the *Hora Staccato* reveals the former a more dazzling and vibrant virtuoso, you will not go wrong with Stern. Satisfactory recording.

—P.G.

KHACHATURIAN: *Chant Poème*; **Anahid Ajemian** (violin) and **Maro Ajemian** (piano), and **BARTOK**: *Rondo No. 1* (on a Folk Tune) and *Bulgarian Dance No. 1* from *Mikrokosmos*; Maro Ajemian. Victor disc 12-0343, price \$1.25.

▲A new and uncommonly gifted brother and sister—Anahid and Maro Ajemian—playing the same instrumental combination as their notable predecessors—Yehudi and Hepsibah Menuhin—but in an entirely different basic tradition. In their first American tour this past season they established quite a reputation for themselves, specializing in modern and contemporary music. The Khachaturian piece exploits the violinist to advantage. It can be described as a bit of Russian-Armenian impressionism, an ingenious arrangement of unimportant melodic material for atmospheric effects. Its attraction from the record is due as much to the fine performance of the Ajemians as to the composer. The Bartok excepts are of different substance. Here the interest lies not only in the folk rhythms and melodies but also in their

treatment by one of the most cultivated musicians of our time. All of the pieces in his *Mikrokosmos* pose problems which, it is often said, are more interesting to the player than the listener. Those drawn to the record by the Khachaturian opus may find Bartok in the end more enduring. Miss Ajemian's crisp, clean playing is in keeping with that of the composer. (He once recorded a *Dance in Bulgarian Rhythm* in his Columbia album 445.) Both sides are well recorded.

—J.N.



SONGS OF AUVERGNE (Arr. Cantaloube); Madeleine Gray (soprano) with Orchestra, conducted by Elie Cohen. Columbia set M or MM-758, three discs, price \$4.75.

▲Those who know these fascinating arrangements of folk songs from a southern province of France profess to find an enchantment in the music unparalleled in any other folk ma-

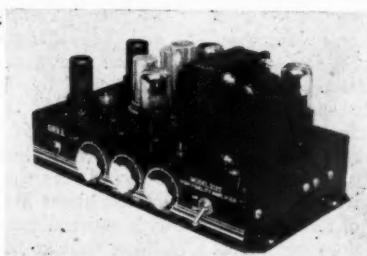
terial on records. One can query whether the songs, so appealing in themselves, the exquisite artistry of Mme. Gray, or the highly colorful and atmospheric arrangements of Cantaloube is the determining factor in their success. For my own part, I feel it is a combination of all three. Canteloube since his twenty-first year (1900) has "devoted much time to the study of folk-song in an effort to imbue modern music with some of its freshness and vigor". A pupil of d'Indy, he recalls in these songs his teacher's treatment of similar folk material — one thinks of the latter's *Symphony on a Mountain Air*. Perhaps what makes Cantaloube's contribution here so attractive to many is its impressionistic harmonic beauty, which though individual has a close affinity with the work of Debussy and Ravel.

There are strongly marked Celtic characteristics in the natives of Auvergne and these I hear in their songs. Also I hear faint echoes of the Hebridean songs, which Margaret Kennedy-Fraser collected and arranged. There are many moods in this collection but the Auvergne singers seem to

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have been most inspired when extolling the beautiful countryside. The very first song, *Water from the Spring*, or the Shepherd's *Bailero* (which Sackville-West included in his *Personal Preferences*) has a captivating quality. What a pity Columbia did not endeavor to supply us with translations, for surely these would have been most welcome and added greatly to one's enjoyment. Titles convey a mood but hardly the *raison d'être* for the poem, and the thoughts of the lyricist are quite as important as the music. Often the fascination of a folk song is derived from its words. Yet, there is no gainsaying that the musical appeal of these folk tunes is considerable, offering an exceptional experience in music.

Though it is unfortunate that the recording reveals its age, I can hardly imagine it regarded as a deterrent to the musical pleasure.

DEBUSSY: *La Damoiselle élue* (5 sides); The Philadelphia Orchestra, conducted by Eugene Ormandy, with Bidu Sayao (soprano), Rosalind Nadell (contralto), and The Women's Chorus of the University of Penna., and *De Fleurs* (1 side); Bidu Sayao with Milne Charnley (piano). Columbia set M or MM-761, three discs, price \$4.75.

▲The dynamics of this music are better conveyed in this recording than in the 1938 issue of Victor, made in France. Moreover, the quality of the Philadelphia Orchestra is superior to that of the Pasdeloup. Though Columbia has contrived to surround the voice of Sayao with an orchestral fullness, as though it were a cloak draped about her shoulders, not all the sound-texture remains as clear as one might like it. The chorus often seems veiled and few of its words are distinguishable. Ormandy does not reveal the ingenuity of Coppola in rhythmic subtleties or tonal nuances, yet his direction is musically competent. True, the rhythmic fluidity of Debussy's music is a matter of quantity rather than accent, yet the accents do not have to be treated like identical stepping-stones. Of all the participants, only Miss Sayao supplies the needed inflections. Her singing is supple, tonally lovely and compassionate. Miss Nadell is a capable, smooth-voiced narrator, and the chorus sings acceptably.

La Damoiselle élue has a youthful sentiment and sweetness. Debussy at 26 was under the spell of the imagistic poetry of Dante Gabriel Rosetti, which he discovered during his *Prix de Rome* sojourn. In setting the poem, the young composer omitted the verses of the lover, focusing his attentions entirely on the Blessed Damozel's yearning and prayers. He divided his text between a woman's chorus, a solo contralto voice as narrator, and a solo soprano as the Blessed Damozel. The latter enters at the half-way point (third record face) and fades out before the end. There is a vagueness to the music — a delicate redolence that one almost feels could be destroyed by a sudden gust of air. Though foreshadowing the later Debussy, this cantata is an uneven work, beautiful and affecting if sometimes trite.

The filler-in is an early song in which a yearning lover "sees in the glaring colors and deadly green of a conservatory the image of his distress". It is not one of Debussy's best songs being almost conventional despite its vague tonalities. Maggie Teyte has recorded it previously. Her interpretation is considerably more dramatized than Sayao's, who sings it with an artistic restraint that I find praiseworthy.

—P.H.R.

OFFENBACH: *La Périchole* — *O, mon cher amant*; *Ah quel diner*; *Mon Dieu, quelles hommes sont bêtes*; *Je t'adore, brigand*; and *Contes d'Hoffman* — *Barcarolle*; Jennie Tourel (mezzo-soprano) with Orchestra, conducted by Maurice Abravanel. Columbia set M or MM-299, two 10-inch discs, price \$2.90.

▲Tourel is a delight. On the evidence of the record, she should be presented as La Périchole at the Metropolitan Opera. Offenbach's satirical comedy may be out of the realm of realism, but the fact that its scene is Peru (is there another opera laid in Peru?) would not be remiss at this time, when everything has a South American flavor. Peruvians might claim the escapades of the Viceroy and La Périchole were musically a la Parisien, for Offenbach did not, like Bizet, seek out authentic melodies but instead devised his own. Miss Tourel's sense of comedy is piquant, her charm in sentiment assured. If the original Périchole "extracted every ounce of mournful sentiment" from the letter of farewell (*O, mon cher amant*), thus pro-

voking the gallery to the wildest applause Tourel does not similarly cheapen the scene. Her *Je l'adore* is equally affecting, though it does not dim the memory of Maggie Teyte's. In the familiar *Barcarolle*, which I find an intrusion in this set, Tourel competes with Tourel, singing both parts. It must be admitted this stunt has been accomplished as successfully as any of its kind on records. Yet, in the middle, when the two voices blend closely, the quality of sound is too much the same for perfect illusion. However, this proves one of the best *Barcarolles* recorded, because Tourel avoids excesses. Abravanel handles the orchestra expertly and the recording is very good.

POULENC: *Les Chemins d'amour*; and **ROY:** *How Do I Love Thee*; Gladys Swarthout (mezzo-soprano) with Gibner King at the piano. Victor 10-inch disc, price \$1.00.

▲ The Poulenc is a typical waltz song of the Parisian music hall type. Miss Swarthout introduced it last spring in a radio program and received more fan mail than for any single selection she had ever sung on the air. Unquestionably, the singer has a waiting audience for her recording. Coupled with the gay and charming waltz is a more serious song by William Roy, a setting of Elizabeth Barrett Browning's forty-third sonnet from her collections, *Sonnets from the Portuguese*. Though Mr. Roy pursues a conventional course in his music, the song has a type of expressive sentiment that appeals to many. Miss Swarthout sings it earnestly and expressively. The recording is in line with the usual voice and piano set-up, giving the singer the prominence.

SCHUMANN: *Liederkreis, Op. 39*; Helen Traubel (soprano) with Coenraad Bos at the piano. Columbia set M or MM-752, five 10-inch discs, price \$6.00.

▲ Traubel has become a better lieder singer than she was ten years ago, when she made her early Victor records. Working with Coenraad Bos, whose knowledge of lieder is perhaps second to none among us at the present time, she has developed stylistically. Though there is admirable artistic restraint and musical intelligence in her performance of these songs, I do not think Traubel brings the appealing intimacy and depth of poetic

suggestion that others do. Inherently, the soprano is an operatic artist, and in lieder one feels a certain suppression of her essential exuberance of tone. Schorr's 1938 recording of this same cycle left one in similar doubt, though he like Traubel commanded our respect for his endeavor. Through the years, it has not been Schorr's records of the best of these songs that have been reproduced over and over again on the phonographs of this magazine's staff but individual ones made by other artists.

Schumann's *Liederkreis* (*Song Wreaths*) from the poems of Joseph von Eichendorf, was written in 1840, the year of his marriage. They were not intended as a group by the poet, hence *Liederkreis* is not as well-balanced a cycle as *Dichterliebe*, where the poetic sentiment of Heine is more closely unified. Previously, Schumann wrote a cycle, called *Liederkreis I, Op. 24*, to poems by Heine, but of nine songs only one, *Mit Mythen und Rosen*, is really well known. In the present cycle over half of the 12 songs are widely known and rank among the best of Schumann's lieder. These are *Intermezzo*, *Waldesgespräch*, *Mondnacht*, *Auf eine Burg*, *Im Walde*, and *Frühlingsnacht*. Perusal of catalogues reveals very few of these existent in other recordings. Schorr's album is no longer listed. Even Elisabeth Schumann's exquisitely poised version of *Mondnacht*, one of the loveliest recordings she gave us, is missing (Victor 14076), though Tauber's fine per-

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formance is still available on import (Parlophone PO169). Lehmann's *Waldesgespraech* (Victor 1732) and *Fruehlingsnacht* (Victor 1856) exist however to challenge the Traubel discs. Thus we find she has a wide field to herself and it remains a foregone conclusion that many lovers of lieder will welcome this set. It is unfortunate that the recording features the singer's voice to the detriment of Mr. Bos' fine accompaniments.

TRADITIONAL (arr. Bass): *Eile, Eile;* and *A Cantor for a Sabbath*; Jan Peerce (tenor) with Orchestra, conducted by Warner Bass. Victor disc 12-0376, price \$1.25.

▲Honoring the observance of Jewish holidays this month, Peerce sings two traditional songs of the Jewish synagogue. In concert, Peerce has sung various songs of faith, Catholic and Jewish, with great success. One can readily believe his performance of the traditional *Eili, Eili (Father, Why Hast Thou Forsaken Me?)* will become one of his most popular recordings, for he endows it with an appropriate earnestness and fervor. The other song is a humorous one, dealing with the impressions of three men — a tailor, a blacksmith and a teamster — concerning a new cantor who comes to their town. One does not have to understand the Hebrew language to get the humor which Peerce subtly conveys. Good recording.

WAGNER: *Five Songs (Wesendonck Gedichte)*; Eileen Farrell (soprano) with Leopold Stokowski and his Symphony Orchestra. Victor set DM-1233, three discs, price \$4.75 (manual \$5.75).

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▲Miss Farrell needs no introduction to American radio listeners. Hers is one of the great voices that radio has almost exclusively claimed for its own. Musicians and music lovers alike have acclaimed her performances of great operatic arias and famous songs for a long, long time, and I have often heard listeners say she should be singing Wagner at the Metropolitan. Certainly, considering the beauty and stylistic eminence of her singing in this album, there is every reason to believe that she could successfully essay the roles of Isolde and Bruennhilde. Her acting ability is, of course, an unknown factor at this time, but even if it failed to match the expressive qualities of her singing she would go a long way. Not since Frida Leider made her recordings of *Schmerzen* and *Traeume* has there been the "vital spark" and sensuous beauty of sound in these songs on records. To be sure, it is not alone Miss Farrell that contributes the "magic" of the sound in these discs, for Stokowski matches her with a tonal beauty which is most impressive. Too, the recording has spaciousness of sound and a welcome acoustic liveness. Here, in my estimation, is reproduction that vies with the best of English Decca's often overrated FFRR, revealing a better conception of balance and detailed clarity.

In January 1942, Victor issued three of the *Wesendonck Gedichte* — *Traeume, Schmerzen* and *Im Treibhaus* — sung by Helen Traubel with the Philadelphia Orchestra, conducted by Mr. Stokowski. Miss Traubel's singing of those songs remains among her best offerings to the phonograph. Sometime, prior to the war, Tiana Lemnitz made all five of the songs with the original piano accompaniment for Polydor (57084/85 and 57028). Her singing, though tonally lovely, lacks essential fervor. Wagner's five *lieder* have much of the same pulsating atmosphere of his great operatic arias and I, for one, feel they are best served by a fervent-voiced singer and an orchestral background. Into the two loveliest, the composer "distilled some of the magical essences of the music of *Tristan*", and only the orchestra conveys the full magic of the mood. There is a thrill in these performances that can only be experienced, not described.

There are those who criticize Stokowski's breadth of tempo, especially in *Im Treibhaus*, but Miss Farrell's opulent singing sustains

the vocal line, giving it the requisite impetus which a faster tempo usually conveys. *Träume*, which is uncut, gains in my estimation with the added impulse of movement heard from this recording. I cannot recall a more stirring rendition of *Schmerzen*.

—J.N.

In The Popular Vein

by Enzo Archetti

Blue As A Heart Ache and *Don't Telephone — Don't Telegraph*; Capitol 40081. *What It Means To Be Blue* and *Never Trust A Woman*; Capitol 40054. *Downtown Poker Club* and *That's What I Like About the West*; Capitol A40031. *Who? Me?* and *Foolish Tears*; Capitol 15113. *Pretty Red Lights* and *Banjo Polka*; Capitol 15101. *Suspicion* and *Flo From St. Joe, Mo.*; Capitol 40109. *Artistry in Western Swing* and *Happy Birthday Polka*; Capitol 40095. All by Tex Williams and His Western Caravan. Vocals by Tex and Trio.

• This is another facet of modern Western music. Actually, it is swing music on Western themes, genuine or manufactured. You may find it enjoyable because it has pep and some musical ideas, but this is not the stuff from which folk music grows. *Artistry* is a specially composed Stan Kenton opus, an extension of his "Artistry" series, based on various phases of typically American music: boogie, blues, hot, swing, etc. It is expertly done, though the "Western" characteristics are somewhat swamped by the elaborate composed "improvisations". *That's What I Like About the West* Tex's answer to Phil Harris' *That's What I Like About the South* — and the tunes are practically identical. *Suspicion* and *Downtown* are the very same patter songs made popular by Phil Harris — and the presentations here are practically identical with Harris'. Only a few numbers are Western in the Gene Autry or Roy Rogers sense of the word.

Tex Williams' voice has sufficient Western twang and his enunciation is perfect. In songs like *Pretty Red Lights*, *Who? Me?*, and *Suspicion* — that's important.

Shirley Steps Out and *The World Is Waiting For the Sunrise*; The Benny Goodman Sextet (Personnel: Benny Goodman, clarinet; Mel Powell, piano; Red Norvo, vibraphone; Al Hendrickson, guitar; Red Callender, bass; Lee Young, drums). Capitol 15069.

Somebody Else Is Taking My Place and *Why Don't You Do Right*; Benny Goodman and His Orchestra, with Peggy Lee. Columbia 38198.

September, 1948

Have You Ever Been Told and *The Blues Jumped Up and Got Me*; Benny Goodman and His Orchestra. Vocals by Emma Lou Welch and Lilian Lane. Capitol 15111.

• The Sextet numbers are swing, neatly done to a turn. Mel Powell's piano-ing is prominently featured, though Benny Goodman's clarinet and Red Norvo's vibes can rightfully share honors. Rhythm is perfect. *The World* will leave your pick-up smoking.

The two numbers with Peggy Lee have bounce and rhythm but neither tune is particularly distinguished as presented here. *Why Don't You Do Right* is a negro number and Peggy's voice hasn't the requisite bite to make it convincing. There are some good bits in the background, though, especially on clarinet. The remaining disc is commonplace. If it wasn't for Goodman's clarinet and some very expert orchestration, it wouldn't deserve mention.

Freddie Slack's Boogie Woogie, Vol. II; Freddie Slack with rhythm and full orchestra accompaniment. Capitol Album CC-83, 3-10" discs.

• A White man's boogie which holds its own with any Black man's, especially *Boogie in G*. It has all the depth of feeling and sincerity of one born to the music. All but two of the numbers are Slack originals. All are played as piano solos with rhythm or orchestral accompaniment except *The Brown Danube*, which is a solo. All are top notch and exciting. Don't miss this album.

An Evening With Victor Borge; Columbia Album C-161, 4-10" discs.

• The only complaint against this album is that there isn't enough of Victor Borge, monologist. There are plenty of pianists who can play Debussy's *Clair de lune*, *Stardust*, etc., as well and better than he, but there is only one Victor Borge who can poke fun at grand opera (as in Bizet's *Carmen*) so devastatingly or think of such a zany thing as *Inflation Language*. This set is topnotch entertainment but there just isn't enough of Victor Borge.

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Sing, Cowboy, Sing; Shug Fisher and His Ranchmen Trio, Capitol Album AC-77, 3-10" discs.

●Genuine stuff, well sung by a cowboy with a voice. This is not a Hollywood presentation, but a relaxed performance of real cowboy songs, in a real cowboy manner. Only the electric guitar in the accompaniment is out of place. Gene Autrey has probably spoiled *Boots and Saddle* for the kids but this version by Shug Fisher is really good and should be given a chance. *Yippi Ti Yi Yo* has pep and flavor. *Cowboy's Dream* is *My Bonnie Lies Over The Ocean* with Western lyrics. All the other songs have a genuine ring. This set deservedly belongs under the Americana label.

Latin American Rhythms; Freddy Martin and His Orchestra. Victor Album P-213, 4-10" discs.

●Congas, sambas, tangoes, and a variety of other rhythms — all very danceable but not very Latin-American in feeling or treatment. One point about Freddy Martin's arrangements: the piano is always prominently featured, and when it's under the expert hands of Barclay Allen, as it is here, results are always enjoyable.

Sunrise Boogie and Moondust Rhapsody; Columbia 38175.

That Five O'Clock Feelin' and I Don't Want To Meet Any More People; Columbia 38203. Frankie Carle and His Orchestra. Vocals by Marjorie Hughes and Nan Wright.

●The first two are in the well-beloved Carle style and pattern. They are splendid, with plenty of piano. The others are for juke box trade and jump dancers. All around good recording.

Bye Bye Blues and Friendly Mountains; Alvino Rey and His Orchestra. Vocal by Jimmy Joyce. Capitol 15104.

●More of a novelty than the usual Alvino Rey. *Blues* is the oldie in pseudo-old style orchestration, with banjo. The Three X Rays lend a hand vocally. Reverse is from *The Emperor Waltz* with echo effects done on the Sonovox. Rey is much better when he plays Latin American rhythms.

Put the Blame On Mame and Just A Shade On the Blue Side; Janette Davis, with Orchestra under the direction of Archie Bleyer. Columbia 38223.

●If you want to know the truth about national catastrophes like the Chicago fire and the San Francisco earthquake, listen to Janette Davis' story about Mame. This sultry voiced singer has a way of underlining her words with subtle rhythm. She's especially good in Carmichael's *Just A Shade*. Don't fail to hear this one.

When Day Is Done and Neopolitan Nights; Phil Brito, with organ accompaniment. Musicraft 577.

●Softly and poetically done in Slumber Hour style. Brito is best in things like this.

Put 'Em In A Box, Tie 'Em With A Ribbon and You Can't Run Away From Love; Ray McKinley and His Orchestra. Vocals by Marcy Lutes and Ray McKinley. Victor 20-2873.

For Heaven's Sake; Ray McKinley and His Orchestra. Vocal by Marcy Lutes. *You Came A Long Way*; Ray McKinley and Some of the Boys (Personnel: Johnny Gray, guitar; John Potoker, piano; Johnny Chance, bass; Paul Kashishian, drums). Victor 20-2913.

●Not the Ray McKinley of boogie fame in the first three sides. These are commonplace and anyone could have done them as well. Fourth side is another story. The Boys are more subtle with this Latin-American rhythm and the result is definitely better.

Songs for Children; Tex Ritter. Capitol Album DC-91, 3-10" discs.

Rye Whiskey and Boll Weevil Song; Tex Ritter, with String Band. Capitol 40084.

Rock and Rye and My Heart's As Cold As An Empty Jug; Tex Ritter with (a) Guitar and (b) Western Band. Capitol 15119.

Deck of Cards and Rounded Up In Glory; Tex Ritter, with String Band. Capitol 40114.

Dallas Darlin' and I've Had Enough of Your Two-Timin'; Tex Ritter, with String Band. Capitol 40090.

●One of our best cowboy singers, who has a genuine Western voice, with the right twang and style. In traditional songs like *Rye Whiskey*, *Boll Weevil*, and *Rock and Rye* he's superb, deserving to be classed with the best folk singers. In the patently manufactured Western songs, he still succeeds in being interesting because he infuses even these with a feeling of authenticity. And, in his newest venture — children's songs — he combines intimacy, relish, and good humor with his cowboy style to make a combination which can't fail with the kids. He is best in the folk songs and here he accompanies himself on guitar. The string band accompaniments are modest and rhythmic. The Western band accompaniments are characterized by fuller sound and the electric guitar — an instrument which has become associated with the Western band style but which strikes me as incongruous. The children's records have guitar accompaniment and sound effects.

Gypsy Dreams; Jascha Datsko and His Gypsy Ensemble. Capitol Album CC-100, 3-10" discs.

●This is a more interesting album than *Gypsy Nights*, by this same ensemble, previously reviewed. The music is more exotic, more fascinating. Two pieces are already familiar in symphonic arrangements: *Roumanian Rhapsody* being practically identical to Enesco's, and in *Caucasian Dances* are found melodies used by Ippolitov-Ivanov in his *Caucasian Sketches*. The remaining numbers are *Ya-*

blochko (Red Apple), Tachanka, and Oo Kalitky (At the Gate) are all traditional Russian folk tunes, and well chosen ones, too. Altogether an enjoyable album in which the playing seems better coordinated than in the previous one.

American Banjo Album; Nathaniel Shilkret and Orchestra. Rex Schepp, banjo soloist. Victor Album P-218, 3-10" discs.

● It's hard to think of an excuse for issuing this album except as a vehicle to display Rex Schepp's expert banjo playing. There's no rhyme or reason for the arrangements of Myddleton's *Down South*, Foster's *Old Black Joe*, and David Rose's *Holiday for Strings*. Shilkret's *Sand Dance* (reminiscent of Dett's *Juba Dance*) is a shade better but not outstanding. His *Serenade Rhapsodic* (subtitled *Banjo Concerto*), patently music manufactured to fit a situation is eclectic as all of his compositions — its sources being Gershwin and Addinsell.

Sunday In Old Santa Fe and *Cielito Lindo*; Andy Russell, with (a) Paul Weston and His Orchestra and (b) with Orchestra. Capitol 15158.

● Even if both are romantic numbers, it is hardly necessary to moon over them the way Andy does here. *Cielito* is all in Spanish and the other, nearly so. Maybe Andy's aiming for a different kind of market. Recording is good.

The Man On the Flying Trapeze and *By the Light Of the Silvery Moon*; Les Paul. Capitol 15147.

● This record was made, not for the music, but to exploit the comic effects which can be accomplished on the electric guitar in the hands of Les Paul. The *Flying Trapeze* performance is in the form of a sketch with a circus ringmaster making stentorian announcements. Music is at a minimum. *By the Light Of the Silvery Moon*, done with a modest instrumental accompaniment, is more music but mostly electric guitar. Mildly entertaining.

Talking To Myself About You and *My Fair Lady*; John Paris, with Russ Case and His Orchestra. Victor 20-2992.

● This is a new voice to me. In style and quality, it effects a cross between Vaughn Monroe and Bing Crosby, if you can imagine such a thing. Not uninteresting!

Moe Zarl's Turkey Trot and *Git Up Off'n the Floor, Hannah!*; Red Ingle and The Natural Seven. Capitol 15123.

● Mozart's *Rondo alla Turca* gets a rough going over and comes out on top, unscathed. Credit is due to Frank Leithner's expert piano playing. He manages to run through the piece practically as written, in spite of the shenanigans going on around him. The reverse, subtitled *A Bitter New Year's Eve*, is more slap-

stick, with vocal by The Mad Madrigal Singers — emphasis on the *mad!* Good fun!

Mamma Goes Where Papa Goes and *Many Happy Returns Of the Day*; Kay Starr, with Dave Cavanaugh's Music. Capitol 15137.

● A comedy number, in imitation of a type of Negro song, and a romantic one. Kay Starr displays her versatility. Capitally (and Capital-y) supported. Red Nichols does a cornet solo on one side.

This Is the Moment! and *Ah, But It Happens*; Tony Martin, with The Lyttle Sisters, Chorus, and Earle Hagen and His Orchestra. Victor 20-2958.

● A smooth Tony Martin to delight the girls. The first is from the picture by that name.

It's You Or No One; Doris Day, with Orchestra. *I'm In Love*; Doris Day and Buddy Clark, with Orchestra. Columbia 38290. *I'd Rather Be Wrong Than Sorry* and *The Night Has A Thousand Eyes*; Buddy Clark, with Orchestra under the direction of (a) Mitchell Ayres and (b) Dick Jones. Columbia 38263.

● These two have a way with a tune. The first two numbers are from the picture *Romance On the High Seas* in which Doris Day is starred. The duet is quite entertaining. *The Night* is a very good rhumba from a picture by the same name.

Remind Me To Tell You and *Simon Says*; The Three Suns, with vocals by The Sun Maids and Artie Dunn. Victor 20-3011.

● It looks like another hit for the Three Suns in *Simon Says*. And it's not in the *Peg O' My Heart* pattern! The reverse is musically less interesting though expertly done.

Cuckoo Waltz and *You Call Everybody Darling*; Jerry Wayne with (a) Organ accompaniment and (b) Rhythm accompaniment. Columbia 38286.

● This is the Jerry Wayne of *You Can't Be True Dear* fame but these two pieces are not in the same vein. The waltz is neatly done, with

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some of the original Teutonic character still intact. Reverse is a Western style boogie, pepplly done, whistling and all. Quite entertaining!

Lonesome and Tomorrow Night; Victor 20-3025. *Ain't Doin' Bad Doin' Nothin'* and *Somebody Else's Picture*; Victor 20-2983. Swing and Sway with Sammy Kaye. Vocals by the Sunday Serenade Sweethearts, Don Cornell, Clyde Burke, and The Kaydets. • These should have been billed in the names of the vocalists because the swingin', and swayin' of Sammy are very much in the minimum. Pleasant enough, as far as they go but they don't go far enough.

Too Much-a-Manana and *Ring, Telephone, Ring*; Kay Kyser and His Orchestra. Vocals by Harry Babbitt, Gloria Wood, and The Campus Kids. Columbia 38262.

• On the comic side but only fair for Kay Kyser. Usually he has better material. Recording good.

Love That Boy; Johnny Mercer and The Pied Pipers. *Louisville Lou*; Johnny Mercer. Both with Paul Weston and His Orchestra. Capitol 15152.

• Typical of these artists, but good. *Lou* has fine swing.

Talkin' Boogie and *Just A Pair of Blue Eyes*; Tex Williams and His Western Caravan. Capitol 15175.

• *Talkin' Boogie* is original only in name. Actually, it is a Phil Harris type of chant, set to Western boogie style as developed by Spade Cooley. Reverse is another Western. Entertaining but not vital!

Who Sleeps and Swedish Pastry; Stan Hasselgard and His Smorgasbirds. (Personnel: Stan Hasselgard, clarinet; Arnold Ross, piano; Rollo Garberg, bass; Frank Bode, drums; Barney Kessel, guitar, Red Norvo, vibraphone). Capitol 15062.

• Neat little swing numbers built around Stan Hasselgard, clarinetist, one of the sensational jazz instrumentalists, imported from Sweden. First is a Red Norvo composition and the other is Barney Kessel's. Really satisfying!

Piano Rhythms; Count Basie, His Instrumentalists, and Rhythms. Victor Album P-200, 4-10" discs. *Ready, Set, Go!* and *Seventh Avenue Express*; Victor 20-3003. *Guest In A Nest and Money Is Honey*; Victor 20-2771. *Useless Frustration* and *Brand New Wagon*; Victor 20-2529. *I've Only Myself To Blame and It's Monday Every Day*; Victor 20-2850. *I'm Drownin' In Your Deep Blue Eyes and South*; Victor 20-2346. *Baby, Don't Be Mad At Me and Hey, Pretty Baby*; Victor 20-2948. Count Basie and His Orchestra. Vocals by Jimmy Rushing, Jeanne Taylor, and Bob Bailey.

• This album is a pure, unadulterated jazz delight. Light, swingy, and solid. Basie's piano

dances on the rhythm like the sun on water. The substance is added by "His Instrumentalists" — mostly trumpet, trombone, and sax. Each record contains a Basie original and someone else's tried and true jazz work. Basie's are: *Backstage At Stuff's, St. Louis Boogie*, *Basie's Basement*, and *Swingin' the Blues*. The others: *My Buddy, Shine On Harvest Moon, I Never Knew*, and *Sugar*. They are 100% instrumental and each is a jewel. It would be gross unfairness to put one above the other. The pieces by the whole band sound more impressive but on second hearing they are generally less substantial and satisfying. Some, like *Seventh Avenue Express* and *South* are very exciting and those with Jimmy Rushing doing the vocals have an authentic ring. On the whole, all are well above average. Technically too, they are fine.

Paul Whiteman Selects Records For the Millions; Columbia Album C-163, 4-10" discs.

• The Dean must have been in a mellow mood when he made this selection for every number is on the soft swing and sentimental side. These are repressions of eight unforgettable Columbia records: *Louise* by Paul Whiteman and His Orchestra, with Bing Crosby as vocalist; *Embraceable You* by Teddy Wilson and His Orchestra; *On the Sunny Side of the Street* by Benny Goodman and His Sextet, with Peggy Lee as vocalist; *There's A Small Hotel* by Claude Thornhill and His Orchestra; *Someone To Watch Over Me* by Frank Sinatra, with Orchestra under the direction of Axel Stordahl; *Ain't Misbehavin'* by Harry James and His Orchestra; *I Can't Give You Anything But Love*, *Baby* by Louis Armstrong and His Orchestra; and *Mood Indigo* by Duke Ellington and His Orchestra, with Ivy Anderson as vocalist. All are too well known to discuss in detail, being jazz classics. This album belongs in everybody's library.

Constellation and September In the Rain; Sam Donahue and His Orchestra. Capitol 15172.

• Both are wholly instrumental with plenty of bounce and ideas, especially in Donahue's own composition, *Constellation*. It can be seen that he has learned plenty about effective orchestration from Ellington. Bob Du Rant, piano; "Tak" Takorvian, trombone, and of course, Sam Donahue, tenor sax, have many highspots to themselves. Very, very good!

Little Girl and Baby, Baby All the Time; The King Cole Trio. Capitol 15165.

• Hardly better than a usual K.C.T. disc. The *Baby, Baby* promised well, but flopped. Recording good.

Don't Blame Me and The Blue Room; Beryl Davis, with Russ Case and His Group. Victor 20-3019.

• Beryl Davis is upholding her good reputation. This warm voiced songstress turns out two satisfactory performances with very fine support.

You're A Character, Dear and Makin' Love Mountain Style; The Dinning Sisters, with (a) Orchestra conducted by Jack Fascinato and (b) The Art Van Damme Quintet. Capitol 15173.

• Two facets of the Dinning style. Different enough to avoid comparison with other sister acts. Good accompaniments on both sides and also recordings.

Box 155 and If I Could Be the Sweetheart Of A Girl Like You; Elliot Lawrence and His Orchestra. Vocals by Jack Hunter and Rosalind Patton. Columbia 38264.

• The orchestral introductions of both are more interesting than the rest of either side. *Box 155* is all orchestral and neatly paced. The reverse is cute without being outstanding.

Love That Boy and This Is the Moment; Dinah Shore with Orchestra under the direction of (a) Sonny Burke, and (b) Harry Zimmerman. Columbia 38620.

• Dinah knows how to pick them to suit her style. Or is it the other way around? At any rate, here's another bouncy and another torchy one which fit her perfectly.

I've Got News For You and Keen and Peachy; Woody Herman and His Orchestra. Columbia 38213.

• The companies should discontinue calling everything fox-trots when they cannot readily catalog them. Would there be anything wrong in calling *I've Got News* a blues? For that's what it is — and a good one. The flipover is a bouncy jazz improvisation which gives the Herman instrumentalists a workout. Very good!

Mine and Somebody Else's Picture; Skitch Henderson and His Orchestra. Capitol 15136.

• *Mine* is distinctive because it has the Gershwin touch, though it is also a bit reminiscent of Ravel's *Pavane*. It's from the show, *Let Them Eat Cake*. Skitch does a good job with it. All orchestral. Reverse is also good in a different way. For dancing.

Every Day I Love You and There's Music In the Land; Harry James and His Orchestra. Vocal by Marion Morgan. Columbia 38245.

• Tunes from *Two Guys From Texas*, bouncingly done in the familiar James' manner. That manner suits *There's Music* much better than the other. Plenty of James' trumpet on both sides.

Jolly Miller Polka and Barnyard Blues; Spike Haskell and The Jolly Millers. Capitol 15174.

• The polka is traditional, so the label says. I cannot say that I have ever heard it, but it has a fine swing and should be excellent for dancing. The blues is a Haskell composition — a country dance kind of blues, not Negro. It

is peppy and danceable. The orchestra is of the barn-dance type.

Father Goose and Dreams In My Heart; Lois Butler, with The Eagle-Lion Studio Orchestra conducted by Irving Friedman. Capitol 15061.

• This 16 year old singer has already been heard to good advantage in music by Herbert and Romberg in previous Capitol releases. Here she sings songs from her first picture, *Mickey*. Her naturally infantile, though well-placed voice, suits *Father Goose* very well. This is a children's song. Not so with the other side, which is based on Strauss' *Wiener Blut*. Coloratura has not yet been mastered by Miss Butler.

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COLLECTORS: Electric vocal and orchestral cut-outs available reasonably; acoustic vocals on Victor and Columbia, deleted operatic sets both domestic and foreign, recent imports at 20% off. Large stock. Send wants. H. L. Laughlin, Westmoreland, N.H.

The Calloway Boogie and Two Blocks Down, ;,
Turn To the Left; Cab Calloway and His
Orchestra. Vocal by Cab Calloway. Co-
lumbia 38227.

• The boogie is swell, in typical C.C. style.
The reverse is a comedy song, also typical.
Both are worth having.

For You and Tony's Place; Artie Wayne, with
The Crew Chiefs and Andy Phillips and His
Orchestra. Capitol 15140.

• Artie, not Jerry. The voice and style are
pleasant. Particularly good is *For You*. This
is a singer worth watching. Recording good.

Louis Armstrong All Stars (Personnel: Louis
Armstrong, vocal and trumpet; Jack Tea-
garden, vocal and trombone; Bobby Hackett,
trumpet; Peanuts Hucko, tenor sax; Bobby
Haggert, bass; Dick Cary, piano; Sid Cat-
lett, George Wettling, drums). Victor Al-
bum HJ-14, 3-12" discs.

I Want A Little Girl; Louis Armstrong and
His Hot Six. (Personnel: Louis Armstrong,
vocal and trumpet; Barney Bigard, clarinet;
Vic Dickenson, trombone; Charlie Beal,
piano; Allan Reuss, guitar; Red Callender,
bass; Zutty Singleton, drums). *Joseph and*
His Brudders; Louis Armstrong and His
Orchestra. Victor 20-2612.

Some Day and Fifty-Fifty Blues; Louis Arm-
strong and His Stars (Personnel: Louis
Armstrong, vocal and trumpet; Jack Tea-
garden, trombone; Bobby Hackett, trumpet;
Peanuts Hucko, clarinet and tenor sax;
Ernie Caceres, baritone sax and clarinet;
A. Casey, guitar; A. Hall, bass; J. Dough,
piano; Cozy Cole, drums) Victor 20-2530.

I Can't Give You Anything But Love; Louis
Armstrong and His Orchestra (Personnel:
Louis Armstrong, vocal and trumpet; J. C.
Higginbotham, trombone; Charlie Holmes,
Albert Nichols, alto sax; Theo Hill, tenor
sax; Luis Russell, piano; Eddie Condon,
banjo; Lonnie Johnson, guitar; Pops Foster,
bass; Paul Barbarin, drums). *Black and*
Blue; Louis Armstrong and His Orchestra
(Personnel: Louis Armstrong, vocal and
trumpet; Homer Honson, trumpet; Fred
Robinson, trombone; Jimmy Strong, clarin-
et and tenor sax; Bert Curry, Crawford
Wethington, alto sax; Carroll Dickerson,
violin; Gene Anderson, piano; Peck Carr,
banjo; Pete Briggs, bass; Zutty Singleton,
drums). Columbia 38052.

• The career of Louis Armstrong has been
long and variegated. Here are represented
several phases of it. The album was recorded
at a New York Town Hall concert, April 24,
1947. It has audience noise, applause, and all
the characteristics of an on-the-spot affair but
the balance and recording are exceptionally
good, almost as good as a studio job. As per-
formances, all are top notch. Though they do
not erase memories of others on and off discs,
each of these has an exuberance and swing rare
on records. Best is the blues, *Back o' Town*.
But *Rockin' Chair*; *Save It*. *Pretty Mama*;
Pennies From Heaven; *Ain't Misbehavin'*, and

St. James Infirmary are very good. This al-
bum is more than a souvenir of that memorable
jazz concert.

The other two Victor records reflect the
fluctuating personnel of the Armstrong groups
in recent years. In spite of this, the results
remain fairly constant, because the Armstrong
influence is strong. *Fifty-Fifty Blues* is especially
good.

The Columbia couples two recordings made
in 1929, originally issued under the Okeh label,
and now recognized classics. There is a sincerity
and pulse to these not present in the more
modern discs.

Sinbad the Samba and Manana Rhumba; Dolph
Traymon, with Orchestra. Gem 1503.

• Dolph Traymon is a new name to me, but
on the evidence of this disc alone he stands
head and shoulders above the crowd, both as a
pianist and as a composer. Both works are
his own. They have verve, and an irresistible
rhythm. The composer's dazzling piano work
with a first rate anonymous orchestra should
put these pieces and the name of Traymon in
the top brackets in no time at all. Don't miss
this disc! The recording and surfaces are fine.

*Little Darlin' and Never Under estimate the
Power Of A Woman*; Morey Amsterdam,
with Sammy Fidler and Orchestra. Apollo
1127.

• Very disappointing. Who told Morey Am-
sterdam he could sing? And to make matters
worse the recording is atrocious. Both Amster-
dam and Apollo can do better than this.

*A Woman Always Understands and At the
Flying "w"*; Victor 20-3001. *Look For the
Silver Lining and Whip-Poor-Will*; Victor
20-2924. Tex Beneke and His Orchestra.
Vocals by Garry Stevens, Tex Beneke, and
The Moonlight Serenaders.

• Not quite up to the best Beneke standards,
tho *At the Flying "W"* may grow on one. Re-
cording, first rate.

For All We Know and Ah, But It Happens;
Freddie Stewart, with orchestra conducted
by Buddy Cole. Capitol 15161.

• A delightful record for the sweet, relaxed
singing and the restrained support. Maybe
not very important as music, but pleasant.
Recording, fine.

With All My Heart and Goodbye Romance;
The Pied Pipers, with Paul Weston and His
Orchestra. Capitol 15142.

• Pretty much the same comment would go
for this disc, too. One of the best of the Pipers
have done in a long time.

Windshield Wiper and Indian Love Call; Tony
Pastor and His Orchestra. Vocals by Tony
Pastor. Columbia 38233.

• Both rather pointless. Neither is good jazz,
either in a descriptive or improvisational
sense. Even the humor is lame.

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